

CLAIMS

1. A method of audio signal handling, comprising the steps of receiving a compression encoded audio signal and compression decoding the compression encoded audio signal to produce a decoded audio signal, characterised in that the method further comprises: deriving an auxiliary data signal relating to the compression encoded audio signal; communicating the auxiliary data signal together with the decoded audio signal and re-encoding the decoded audio signal utilising information from the auxiliary data signal.
2. A method according to Claim 1, wherein the auxiliary data signal comprises all or part of the encoded audio signal.
3. A method according to Claim 2, wherein the auxiliary data signal comprises audio-related data from the encoded audio signal.
4. A method according to Claim 3, wherein the auxiliary data signal comprises time information from the encoded audio signal.
5. A method according to Claim 4, wherein the auxiliary data signal further comprises ancillary information, such as program-associated data, from the encoded audio signal.
6. A method of audio signal handling, comprising the steps of receiving a compression encoded audio signal and compression decoding the compression encoded audio signal to produce a decoded audio signal, characterised by the further steps of: deriving an auxiliary data signal indicative of the analysis and quantisation employed for the compression encoded audio signal; communicating the auxiliary data signal together with the decoded audio signal and re-encoding the decoded audio signal utilising information from the auxiliary data signal to produce a re-encoded audio signal employing the same analysis and quantisation as the encoded audio signal.

7. A method according to Claim 6, wherein the analysis comprises application of a sub-band filter bank.

8. A method according to Claim 7, wherein the auxiliary data signal is indicative of the frequency analysis into sub-bands and the method of
5 quantisation within each sub-band employed for the encoded audio signal frequency.

9. A method according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the encoded audio signal is an MPEG audio coded signal.

10. A method according to Claim 9, wherein the auxiliary data signal
10 contains information relating to one or more of: the position of audio frame boundaries in the encoded audio signal; frequency sub-bands; scale factors for the sub-bands within each audio frame of the encoded audio signal; bit allocation data for each audio frame of the encoded audio signal.

11. A method according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the
15 auxiliary data signal is combined with the decoded audio signal for communication along a common signal path with the decoded audio signal.

12. A method according to Claim 11, wherein the auxiliary data signal is
20 formatted to enable an integrity check prior to use of the auxiliary data signal in a re-encoding process, to ensure transparent communication of the auxiliary data signal along a decoded audio signal path.

13. A method according to Claim 11, wherein the auxiliary data signal is carried in the least significant bits of a digital decoded audio signal.

14. A method according to Claim 11, wherein the auxiliary data signal is
25 carried as user data bits in a recognized digital interface format.